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TO : The Acting Secretary
THROUGH: G - Mr. Murphy
THROUGH: S/S
FROM : EUR - Foy D. Kohler
SUBJECT: JCS Views on Berlin

JUL 22 1959

1. On July 18 Secretary McElroy telegraphed the views of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on a possible Berlin proposal to Assistant Secretary of Defense Irwin, who is the Defense representative on the Geneva delegation, and instructed him to present them to the Secretary for possible use at the Conference.

2. The JCS proposes that the West should put forward an initial demand for transferring to the sovereignty of the Federal Republic of Germany a 100-mile wide land and air corridor between Helmstedt and Berlin. Negotiating range would be between this demand and a final fallback position of a 60-mile-wide corridor, with control of Western traffic vested in the Western Allies". Mr. McElroy said he believed "that this proposal has considerable merit since it permits the West to take the initiative, and, if properly exploited, places us in a most favorable light in the forum of public opinion, regardless of the Soviet reaction." (A copy of the JCS proposal is attached at Tab A.)

3. The proposal of a land corridor to Berlin under West German sovereignty was carefully considered by the planners in December and January. (It was often combined with the proposal that Berlin be made into an eleventh Land of the Federal Republic.) These proposals were not incorporated in the Western plans because it was considered that they were so obviously non-negotiable. (In this connection it should be noted that the 100-mile corridor to Berlin the JCS proposes would include about one-fourth of East Germany.) Although such a notion has been advocated by various people in the United States, it was never seriously discussed in Germany because it did not seem sufficiently realistic. Such a possibility was barely mentioned in the German press. In our opinion, it would be quite out of keeping with the development of the Conference and the Western approach to introduce such an idea at this stage.

4. I have written a letter of acknowledgement to General Guthrie who sent me a copy of Secretary McElroy's message.

5. In my

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5. In my opinion the delegation in Geneva is fully equipped to deal with the JCS proposal since it includes members who went through all of the Working Group exercises in which similar ideas were considered and rejected.

Approve ☒
Disapprove ☐

Attachment:

JCS Proposal, Tab A.

Clearance:

GER - Mr. Vigderman

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Sent 18 July 1959

TO: ASSISTANT SECRETARY IRWIN FROM SECRETARY McELROY

On 16 July JCS recommended that I make following proposal on Berlin access to Secretary Herter for presentation to Soviets during current Conference:

a. West should note existence of tension-producing factors in present access arrangements and should offer to reduce them by proposing to relinquish two of the three air corridors in exchange for an agreement guaranteeing Western control of a suitable single surface and air access corridor.

b. Maximum psychological impact should be obtained by an initial demand for transferring to FRG sovereignty a 100-mile-wide corridor between Helmstedt and Berlin. Negotiating range would be between this demand and final fallback position of a 60-mile-wide corridor, with control of Western traffic vested in the Western Allies. Western Powers should agree on extent to which their offer is negotiable within the above limits with regard to the width of the required corridor and degree of control they would exercise within the corridor.

c. The minimum Western access requirements should be control of a corridor sixty miles in width, containing both an autobahn and a railroad, and of air space above the corridor at all altitudes which permit the economical and safe flight of all types of aircraft.

d. JCS consider that initial maximum proposal could be expected to produce either outright rejection or quid pro quo demands by the Soviets. Thus, any Soviet response except outright rejection could form the basis for continued negotiations.

I believe that this proposal has considerable merit since it permits the West to take the initiative, and, if properly exploited, places us in a

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most favorable light in the forum of public opinion, regardless of the Soviet reaction.

Accordingly, I would like you to present this proposed tactic to Secretary Herter for ^{possible} use as a current Western negotiating position. If desired, JCS will be requested to provide detailed geographical boundaries of proposed corridor.

Distribution:

The Joint Chiefs of Staff

